

LIVERPOOL ANARCHIST

≡ Issue III

Free Newsletter

December 2019 ♦

Christmas at King Mob's

Public holidays are a real spectacle of mass consumerism - that's no secret. A few subversive minded individuals, going by the name 'King Mob', decided to unsettle the programme a little one Christmas. December 1968 found them turning up at the flagship Selfridges store on Oxford Street, London, with mischievous intentions. Led by Father Christmas himself, in full costume, the group made their way around the store handing out stupidly expensive sweets and toys to overjoyed children - picked right from the shelf! Christmas is not about commodity exchange, it's about gifting and loving, they tell us with a smile. Well the store management and Met police didn't seem to think so. After a bit of a scuffle, Father Christmas was unceremoniously arrested - suspected of revolutionary sympathies - while the children were rounded up and forced to return their gifts.

I'd like to take this not as an exceptional story, but as a practical guide to Christmas shopping. Okay, maybe drop the costume, avoid the CCTV, and have a little more discretion; but a five-finger-discount might just bring us a few real gifts for the holidays. •



*"Never be deceived that
the rich will permit you to
vote away their wealth."*

Lucy Parsons

Labour, Tory, Same Old Story!

Here we go again with another election circus to replace one set of clowns with another! You can vote in who you like but nothing really changes.

The bosses, owners, and political elite continue to rule us; we're still left with unemployment, homelessness, and crap wages; and the environment will continue to be destroyed. If we want radical change then the working class have to organise ourselves in our communities and workplaces, independently from all political parties and bureaucratic trade unions.

Direct action gets what we want to improve conditions here and now. But we must go beyond this and aim for a better society where we control our own lives and work. Social revolution is the ultimate goal, towards a free and equal society of wellbeing for all.

We don't just want the breadcrumbs, we want the whole bakery! •

Mask Up

A CCTV camera on every corner, police intelligence teams at every protest, a hundred smart phones filming anything that might get a 'like'. Surveillance has become our normal condition, but there is no reason why we should make it easy for watching eyes.

Masking up on public actions is just one small step in the direction of protecting ourselves from the State. A bandana, scarf or ski mask will do; or simply use a t-shirt, pulling it up around your face, and tying the arms behind your neck.

The police will gather data on all anti-capitalist and anti-government movements to build up a picture of who is involved in what, who knows who, how groups are structured, and so on. This knowledge is then used to disrupt, misdirect, and even break up our efforts to organise and struggle. It is used to identify and target those who take more confrontational action.

For some, to turn up at a demonstration and be identified on camera may lead to being targeted by fascists; non-citizens risk deportation; parents risk the intervention of social services; gay and trans people may fear being outed; workers risk being sacked or even blacklisted; and so on. We do not live in a free society - we need to defend ourselves appropriately.

When only a few people mask up, they may face being singled out and targeted by police. So you should assess each situation case-by-case to decide whether it is beneficial. In general, however, the practice will become more effective as we normalise it.

There are no doubt downsides to the practice. It can alienate people who don't understand it, invoke fear in those who we wish to give courage, and isolate us from the people we choose to stand with. Therefore we must spread awareness of



Masked anarchists at the Liverpool climate strike, November 29th.

why we do it and encourage others to join us.

Don't assume, I should add, that a mask will make you invulnerable. It's just a piece of cloth, after all. •

Dump Universal Credit

Universal Credit is outright class warfare, to keep us down in the gutter or forced into low-waged, dead-end jobs. It's a way to control and punish us through coercive procedures and sanctions.

Since this cruel policy arrived there's been an increase in homelessness, debt, suicide, and food-banks, to name just a few things.

No matter what the politicians say, we can't just sit back and hope for a Labour government to solve all our problems – we don't want to reform U.C. we want rid of it altogether. Liverpool Solidarity Federation have organised a campaign opposing Universal Credit, building solidarity between claimants and protesting at Job Centres. The possibilities of mutual support and resistance open up as more of us actively organise and take action. An injury to one is an injury to all! •

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Hostile Architecture

Hostile architecture is how the state excludes homeless people from public locations that could otherwise be used for some kind of shelter or for resting on. The most obvious yet subtle example of this would be armrests on park benches; these aren't designed for anyone's comfort they are designed to prevent people lying on the bench. They are a subtle form of social control of so-called public spaces. The public spaces we have are not under common control, from the paths to the flora, it is controlled by state and capital. The state will create hostile architecture in "public spaces" (like streets and parks), to dissuade the presence of rough sleepers who inevitably carry with them the stark reminders of society's inequality. The issue of rough sleeping is not reformed away with hostile architecture, it is hidden, as rough sleepers then have to find worse places to sleep, usually lacking the minimal amount of shelter they sought out, so long as it is out of these "public spaces". When the state claims to tackle homelessness, this is one of the means they plan on doing so. Because capitalist society will continue to have desperate people, they can't reform desperation out of existence, but it can be pushed out of sight. Hostile architecture may seem trivial, but it is exactly how a liberal society

turns cruel and vindictive, by quietly excluding vulnerable people.

Most of us do not control the spaces we occupy and we have no say in their creation, would we create public spaces where a person can't lie down or seek shelter even just for a moment? •



University Strikes

From the 25th of November to the 4th of December the University and College Union (UCU) went on strike over pensions across the UK, three universities joining the strike in Liverpool. On the 26th a march took place, with a good turnout of lecturers and students. At the end there was the normal rally

rubbish. The main two talking points were Labour and "solidarity".

How voting Labour is supposed to help lecturers and other university staff I will never know, especially given that Liverpool will vote Labour regardless.

In terms of solidarity there was certainly a lot of talk. Apparently, the support of precarious Deliveroo riders and students was appreciated and in return we got their "solidarity".

Student support of the strike is very real. All students received an email claiming joining pickets was illegal, and that international students might lose their visas if they didn't cross the picket lines. Despite this, students blockaded one

of management's buildings and issued five demands, ranging from the gender pay gap to protecting library staff.

For UCU bureaucrats solidarity is a meaningless word, with no real interest in free tuition or supporting their own precarious workmates like cleaners. Solidarity goes both ways and if UCU expect support from students and poorer workmates then they should show more of an interest in their struggles. •



Anti-homeless ramp in doorway, Bank of England building.

EVENTS THIS DECEMBER

7th – Manchester & Salford Anarchist Bookfair. A day of stalls and talks from 10:00 to 16:00 at the People's History Museum, Manchester.

19th – Socialist Theory Study Group, discussion on finance capital, at the Unite Building (Churchill Way), from 18:00 to 20:00.

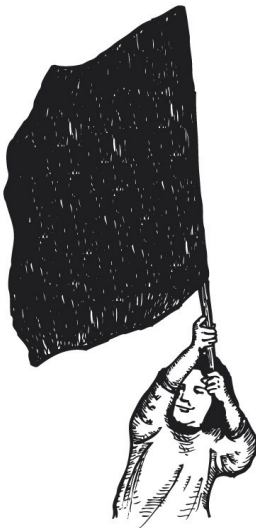
"The question is not whether we accomplish anarchy today, tomorrow, or within ten centuries, but that we walk towards anarchy today, tomorrow, and always."

Errico Malatesta



LOCAL GROUPS

- ♦ **Food not Bombs** meet every Tuesday at Next to Nowhere from 4pm
- ♦ **Hunt Saboteurs** at lpoolhuntsabs@hotmail.co.uk or Facebook @LiverpoolHuntSabs
- ♦ **Louder than Proud** [queer collective] at louderthanproud@protonmail.com
- ♦ **Merseyside Anarchists** at merseysideanarchists@riseup.net
- ♦ **Merseyside Animal Rights Campaigns** on Facebook @MARcampaigns
- ♦ **Merseyside Anti-Fascist Network** on Facebook @MerseyAFN
- ♦ **Solidarity Federation** [anarcho-syndicalist initiative] at liverpoolsolfed@gmail.com



We aim to publish the *Liverpool Anarchist* monthly, and welcome all submissions in line with the following principles:

- ♦ *Anti-State*
- ♦ *Anti-Capitalist*
- ♦ *Intersectional*

Send in feedback, comments, and submissions to:

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